

## Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

COME-00 TRSE-00 AS-01 /076 W

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O P 232300Z JAN 76

FM AMCONSUL CURACAO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2539

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

COMNAVFORCARIB ROOSEVELT ROADS PR PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PDIP, MARR, NA

SUBJECT: GNA-MEP CONFRONTATION LOOMS. MEP LEADER DENOUNCES

DUTCH-BRITISH NAVAL EXERCISE.

REFS: 1) COMSECONDFLT 221808Z JAN 76 2) CURACAO 0018

1. POLITICAL TENSION ON ARUBA HAS INCREASED PERCEPTIBLY IN PAST FOUR DAYS. ON JANUARY 20, ARUBA'S LT. GOV. TROMP REFUSED TO PERMIT BETICO CROES, MEP PARTY BOSS AND ADVISER TO THE ISLAND GOVERNMENT, TO ATTEND A CLOSED SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. FRUSTRATED, CROES PROCEEDED TO ARUBA'S TELEVISION STATION R DEMANDING AND RECEIVING IMMEDIATE AIR TIME TO ANNOUNCE QTE MESSAGE OF IMPORTANCE TO ARUBAN COMMUNITY. UNQTE IN INTEMPERATE LANGUAGE, CROES QTE WARNED UNQTE OF DANGER TO ARUBANS AND THEIR POSSIBLE INDEPENDENCE POSED BY THE PRESENCE OF QTE FOREIGN UNQTE WARSHIPS IN ARUBAN WATERS. HE DENOUNCED QTE SECRET UNQTE MILITARY MANEUVERS BY A JOINT BRITISH/DUTCH TASK FORCE AS AN ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE ARUBANS, AND PROCLAIMED: QTE NEITHER HOLLAND, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GOVERNOR, THE PRIME MINISTER, NOR MARINE MANEUVERS CAN STOP

THE ARUBAN PEOPLE. NO MANEUVERS SHALL STAND IN THE WAY OF  
OUR PEOPLE\* UNQTE

2. COMMENT: BRITISH/DUTCH FLEET EXERCISE REFERRED TO IS OPERATION CARIBREX 2-76, SCHEDULED SOME TIME AGO. EXERCISE WELL KNOWN IN ADVANCE BY MEP LEADERSHIP SINCE FORMER FINMIN DE KORT (MEP) SIGNED CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR BRITISH WARSHIPS. END COMMENT

3. LT. GOV. TROMP HAS SEQUESTERED A COPY OF BROADCAST. NA ATTORNEY GENERAL NAHR HAS ALSO ASKED FOR A COPY TO STUDY FOR POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF NA LAW.

4. ON JAN. 21, CROES ATTENDED OPEN MEETING OF ISLAND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND ABUSIVELY INTERROGATED LT. GOV. TROMP CONCERNING HIS SEIZURE OF BROADCAST TAPES, AND INSISTED FAULT FOR INCIDENT LAY WITH TROMP FOR BARRING HIM FROM MEETING PREVIOUS DAY. CROES REPORTEDLY BECAME SO VIOLENTLY ABUSIVE THAT TROMP HAD HIM EVICTED FROM MEETING AND FILED OFFICIAL COMPLAINT WITH ARUBAN POLICE.

5. JAN. 22, CROES CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE IN MEETING ROOM OF ISLAND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ATTENDED BY FOUR MEP DEPUTIES. SITTING IN LT. GOV.'S SEAT, CROES THREATENED TO QTE PARALYZE ISLAND GOVERNMENT UNQTE ON TUESDAY (JAN. 27) IF MILITARY EXERCISE CONTINUED. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR GENERAL STRIKE IN PROTEST PPA'S JOINING OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO COINCIDE WITH NEXT STATEN MEETING. MEETING REPORTEDLY CALLED JAN. 27. ACCORDING TO GNA SOURCES, CROES HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH TRESPASS ON ISLAND COUNCIL'S PREMISES, BUT RELEASED.

6. CROES HAS CALLED PUBLIC MEETING IN DOWNTOWN ORANJESTAD (ARUBA) FOR FRIDAY NIGHT, JAN. 23. ACCORDING GNA SECURITY AUTHORITIES, CHANCES ABOUT EVEN THAT RESULTING DISTURBANCES COULD QTE GET OUT OF HAND. UNQTE BRITISH ASSAULT CARRIER BULWARK NOW IN CURACAO IN CONNECTION CARIBREX 2-76. SCHEDULED ETA ARUBA JAN. 27 IN CONTINUATION EXERCISES (BELIEVED TO INVOLVE LANDING TROOPS AND LAUNCHING HELICOPTERS ON ARUBA.)

7. COMMENT: GNA HAS ANNOUNCED INTENTION CONTINUE MANEUVERS AS PLANNED. DECISION COULD HEIGHTEN TENSIONS, HOWEVER CANCELLATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NO SOLUTION AT THIS POINT, AND COULD OBVIOUSLY CREATE EVEN GREATER PROBLEMS. CROES LATEST OUTBURST REPORTEDLY DISTURBING MANY ARUBANS INCLUDING SOME OF HIS MORE RESPONSIBLE SUPPORTERS. QUESTIONS HEARD CONCERNING HIS MENTAL STABILITY. SO FAR PM EVERTSZ AND OTHERS HAVE REMAINED COOL AND TRIED TO AVOID MAKING CROES A MARTYR. EDITORIAL COMMENT ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS UNIFORMLY CRITICAL, ACCORDING ONE NEWSPAPER QTE EXTREMELY INFANTILE. UNQTE

8. IN LARGE MEASURE, EFFECT ON ARUBAN INDEPENDENCE BID  
DEPENDENT ON HOW CROES EVENTUALLY EMERGES FROM THIS CONFRONTATION.  
LOSING THIS ONE WILL WEAKEN HIS STRANGLEHOLD ON ARUBAN  
POLITICS AND DIMINISH HIS ROLE IN NA AFFAIRS ACCORDINGLY.

9. CONGEN WILL BE ALERT TO POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOREGOING FOR  
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES VISIT BY U.S. NAVY VESSELS SCHEDULED  
EARLY FEBRUARY.  
HANSON

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## Message Attributes

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